

National Resources Inventory (NRI)

Nebraska's Natural Resources Trends (1982 - 1997)

About the NRI

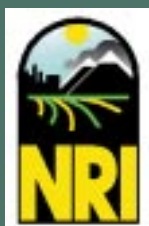
The National Resources Inventory (NRI) is a statistically based survey. It is designed and implemented using scientific principles to assess the conditions and trends of soil erosion, land use trends, wetland acres and other related resources on nonfederal lands in the United States.

The NRI provides a record of trends in the Nation's resources over time on nonfederal land. The present inventory started in 1982 and is conducted every five years (1982, 1987, 1992, and 1997). The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service conducts the inventory.

The inventory highlighted in this summary sampled 800,000 sites across the Nation to compile this database. In Nebraska, data was collected on nearly 22,000 sample locations.

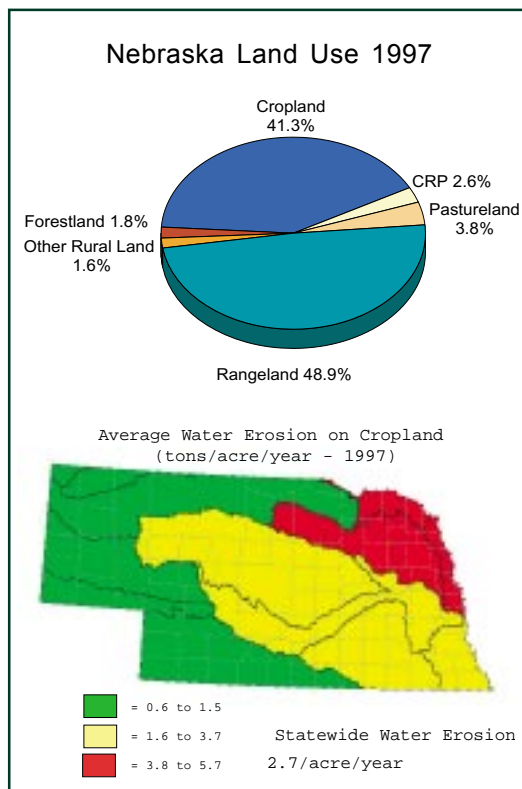
NRI Summary

This summary includes graphic highlights and explanations of the NRI data. For more information or data on Nebraska NRI, call the NRCS in Lincoln, NE at (402) 437-5300 or visit our website at www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov. National data is available at the NRCS national website at www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/NRI.



NE Highlights of the 1997 Inventory

--Land use is dynamic. Changes in use occur between each inventory period. Most of Nebraska is rural land and there are 1.2 million acres of developed land. See pie chart on reverse.



--Since 1982 to 1997, more than 675,000 acres of grassland (range and pasture) have been converted to other uses. During this same time period there are 807,000 acres less cropland. Some of these changes were caused by the start of the Conservation Reserve Program that in 1997 had 1.2 million of the Nebraska acres enrolled. Another 94,000 acres were developed to other uses (urban development, acreage's, etc).

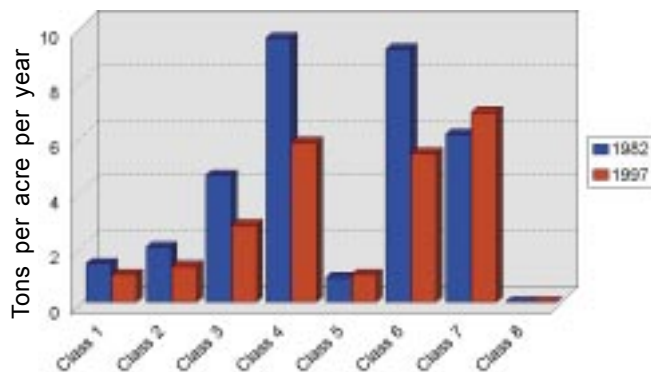
--Soil erosion by water on cropland has almost been cut in half. Since 1982 the average has dropped from 4.5 tons per acre per year to 2.7 tons per acre per year. Wind erosion over this period has remained about the same. (Note: A ton of soil is slightly more than one cubic yard. Erosion means the soil is moving on the field. It does not necessarily mean it all went to the field bottom or into a creek -- but it is moving that way!) See state map of where erosion is greatest.

--In 1982, 13% of NE cropland was eroding at twice the acceptable rate. By 1997, just 6% of NE cropland was eroding at this same rate. This means the most erosive land is either being treated with conservation practices, seeded to grass or put to other land uses. The soil tolerance limit is the rate at which soil can replace itself - it varies by soil type - but generally this limit is 5 tons.

--Nebraska has 12.7 million acres of rural, non-developed prime farmland. More than 10.5 million of that land is in cropland and another 1.4 million in some type of grassland (CRP, pasture or range). In 1997, Nebraska was seventh nationally in the amount of prime farmland acres. From 1982 to 1997, there were 26,700 acres of prime farmland converted to other uses. See pie chart on reverse.

--1997 was the first year for wetland acres to be recorded in the inventory. Nebraska inventoried 1.2 million acres of wetlands. Another 425,300 acres of other aquatic habitat such as lakes and streams were also inventoried. Over half the wetlands are in rangeland.

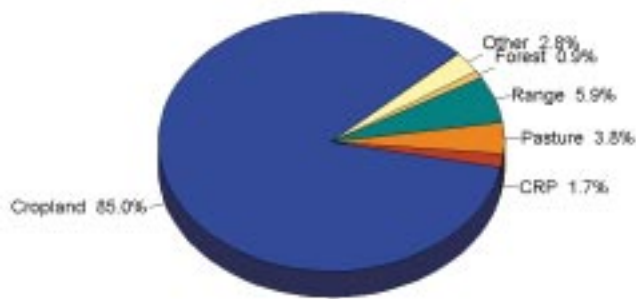
Reduction of Soil Erosion by Land Class (1982 vs 1997)



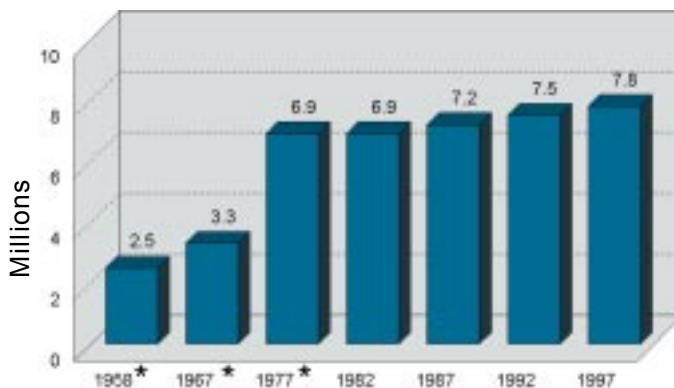
Total Cropland Average Wind Erosion (tons/acre/year)

	NE	Nat'l
1982	1.5	3.3
1987	1.6	3.3
1992	1.6	2.4
1997	1.5	2.2

NE Prime Farmland



Growth of Irrigated Acres



—* Data from Conservation Needs Inventory

Since 1982, there are 868,400 more irrigated acres for a total of 7.8 million acres.

WHO IS THE USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE?

For nearly six decades, the Natural Resources Conservation Service was known as the Soil Conservation Service. Founded in the dust bowl era, SCS worked along side its conservation partners, and directly with our nation's farmers and ranchers on soil erosion, range management, irrigation and flood control. But as time and technology changed, so did the SCS. In the mid-1990's, Congress changed the name to the Natural Resources Conservation Service to more accurately reflect the broader work of the agency employees.

We still work with farmers and ranchers on protecting their land. While terraces are still being built, NRCS may also work on the design of an animal waste system including a plan to manage the manure on the land, or converting planting operations to no-till, incorporating a plan for wildlife, redesigning an irrigation system to low pressure or surge irrigation and how they work, or changing a simple grazing system to a high intensive system.

NRCS works with communities and citizens on solving natural resource problems or development of economic opportunities in town and villages. Whether it is helping bring about a neighborhood trail system, development of a tourism site, helping landowners learn about noxious weed control or uniting citizens in cooperatives to begin new businesses, NRCS is and has been involved.

NRCS offices are located across the state in 81 USDA Service Centers serving all 93 counties. Further details on these topics and more are on our website at www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov.